

**STATEMENT OF JANET SNYDER MATTHEWS, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR FOR CULTURAL RESOURCES, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, BEFORE THE HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS, FORESTS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, CONCERNING H.R. 1083, TO AMEND THE ACT ESTABLISHING THE RIVERS OF STEEL NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA IN ORDER TO INCLUDE BUTLER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, WITHIN THE BOUNDARIES OF THAT HERITAGE AREA.**

**JULY 12, 2007**

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Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to appear before your committee to present the Department of the Interior's views on H.R.1083, a bill to add Butler County to the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

The Department supports enactment of H.R. 1083.

Authorized in 1996 as part of Public Law 104-333, the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area celebrates the industrial and cultural heritage of the steel and steel-related industries in Southwestern Pennsylvania. This region was a center of activity during the Industrial Revolution with the steel industry playing a key role in establishing the preeminence of the United States in mass production industries. It also gave rise to a new chapter in the history of the labor movement, spawning such labor unions as the Congress of Industrial Organizations and the United Steel Workers of America, and bearing witness to the labor protests between management and labor such as the Battle of Homestead in 1892.

Butler County is located in western Pennsylvania on the north side of the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area, comprising approximately 790 square miles with a population of almost

200,000. Butler County contains many historic resources related to the story of the steel industry in Southwestern Pennsylvania such as the American Rolling Mill Company (later known as Armco), a major steel company located in Butler City, and the American Bantam Car Company, who produced the first prototype for a military jeep. There is widespread support at the county and local levels for inclusion of Butler County into the Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area.

The Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area has overseen more than 295 projects since its creation that fulfill the heritage area's mission to ensure that the region's remarkable industrial history and the living legacy of the people of Southwestern Pennsylvania endure for generations, and contribute to the region's economic revitalization. For example, the heritage area conducts and records oral history interviews of former steelworkers across the seven-county region. Over 40 recordings and their transcripts have been used in exhibits throughout the region and made available to the public through the Rivers of Steel archives. In partnership with Greene County, several non-profit groups, and residents, the W. A. Young & Sons Foundry & Machine Shop from the early 1900's is being restored to enable the public to tour the facility and allow blacksmith artisans to set-up studios.

Rivers of Steel National Heritage Area's participation and guidance in the restoration and rebirth of the former Carrie Furnaces of U.S. Steel's Homestead Works is transforming this former industrial site into active economic and recreational uses that will also help to preserve Allegheny County's proud history and profound impact on the steel industry and the world. Currently, the heritage area leads guided hard hat tours that highlight the Ore Yards and Cast House, the Hot Stoves, and the Pump House.

By expanding the heritage area to include Butler County, there will be increased opportunities to conserve, interpret and develop the historical and cultural resources related to the story of the rise of the steel industry and other related industries such as iron processing, and the manufacturing of steel-constructed rail cars and military vehicles in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my testimony. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other members of the committee may have.